

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

16 January 2004

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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HOT TOPICS

Amoeba Warning to Contact Lens Wearers

07 January – New Scientist reported washing your face while wearing contact lenses could increase your chances of getting a potentially blinding eye infection. And the risk is greatest in the UK, according to a leading eye specialist. The culprit in question is a free-living, water-borne amoeba called [Acanthamoeba](#), which can cause severe ulcerations of the cornea - a condition called Acanthamoeba keratitis. The disease is rare but extremely painful and can lead to blindness. "It's a ghastly disease," says John Dart, an ophthalmologist at Moorfields Eye Hospital in London. "It's very resistant to treatment and difficult to eradicate." Contact lens wearers are most susceptible. Only around one in 30,000 contact lens users in the UK contracts the disease. But this rate is 15 times as high as in the US, and seven times as high as it is in the Netherlands. [View Article](#)

Depression Common Following Brain Injury

08 January – Health Day News reported many people who suffer a traumatic brain injury experience major depression or other psychiatric illnesses within a year afterward, say two articles in the January issue of The Archives of General Psychiatry. Researchers at the University of Iowa studied 91 patients who had experienced traumatic brain injury, evaluating their condition at three, six and 12 months after the injury. They found 33 percent of the patients suffered major depression during the first year after their injury. Researchers also found the patients who suffered from depression were more likely to have a history of mood and anxiety disorders. [View Article](#)

DoD and the Anthrax Vaccine

14 January – The DoD Health Affairs Directorate has posted letter in regards to the preliminary injunction against the DoD [anthrax](#) program and the subsequent lifting of that injunction, January 7. The letter can be viewed at <http://www.ha.osd.mil/asd/message.cfm>

Ethnicity May Be Risk Factor for Asthmatic Kids' Allergies

12 January – Yahoo News reported ethnicity may influence the risk of developing multiple allergies in children with [asthma](#), says a U.S. study in the January issue of *Chest*. The study of 791 children, aged 4 to 18, in Hartford, Conn., found Puerto Rican children with asthma were up to three times more likely to suffer indoor and outdoor allergies than white children with asthma. Black children with asthma were two to three times more likely to suffer outdoor allergies than white children with asthma. The high frequency of positive allergy test results in Puerto Rican and black children with asthma in this study

suggest that children in these groups need to be tested for allergies more often. However, these children often have limited access to allergy skin tests. [View Report](#)

MS Threat May Drop by Taking Vitamin D

13 January – The Arizona Republic reported a huge study testing a long-held theory about the cause of [multiple sclerosis](#) has found that women who took a vitamin D supplement cut their risk of developing the incurable neurological disorder 40 percent. The study, which involved 187,563 women, is the first large, prospective examination of an observation that has been around for decades: MS may be caused, in part, by a lack of sunlight sufficient to allow the body to make its own vitamin D. The study, published in this month's issue of *Neurology*, is part of the ongoing Nurses' Health Study. The women in this study were followed for 10 to 20 years. Those who took a daily multiple-vitamin supplement with at least 400 international units of vitamin D had 40 percent less incidence of MS than those who did not take a supplement with vitamin D. Depending on a person's age, 200 to 600 international units a day is recommended. Supplemental vitamin D can be toxic, and doctors cautioned against taking more than the recommended daily amount. Vitamin D from food sources did not seem to lower the incidence of MS. [View Report](#)

Research Raises Cancer Concerns over Deodorants

12 January – Reuters reported chemicals found in underarm deodorants have been detected in the tumors of [breast cancer](#) sufferers, British scientists said Monday. Researchers at the University of Reading found traces of the chemicals called parabens in tissue samples, proving that the preservatives can accumulate inside the body, although a direct link with breast cancer has NOT been proven. "Their detection in human breast tumors is of concern since parabens have been shown to mimic the action of the female hormone estrogen, and estrogen can drive the growth of human breast tumors," Dr. Philippa Darbre, lead author of the study, said. "It would therefore seem especially prudent to consider whether parabens should continue to be used in such a wide variety of cosmetics applied to the breast area," she added. But Dr. Philip Harvey, European editor of the *Journal of Applied Toxicology*, which published the research, stressed the need for more investigation. [View Article](#)

SARS-related Virus Predating SARS Outbreak, Hong Kong

01 February – The *Journal of Emerging Infectious Diseases* reported on a study using immunofluorescence and neutralization assays, researchers detected antibodies to human severe acute respiratory syndrome–associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and/or animal SARS-CoV–like virus in 17 (1.8%) of 938 adults recruited in 2001. This finding suggests that a small proportion of healthy persons in Hong Kong had been exposed to SARS-related viruses at least 2 years before the recent [SARS](#) outbreak. [View Article](#)

Sugar Problems during Pregnancy May up Cancer Risk

09 January – Reuters reported many women have difficulty maintaining normal blood sugar levels during pregnancy and now new research suggests that this problem may raise their long-term risk of cancer, especially [breast cancer](#). Researchers assessed the 20-year cancer outcomes of 753 women who were enrolled in a study looking at the effect of a mother's sugar levels on the developing baby. Various data were analyzed to determine if any of the subjects were admitted to the hospital with a cancer diagnosis during the study period. Thirty-four women--4.5 percent of the entire group--were diagnosed with cancer and in 18 cases this was a breast cancer, Dawson notes. The more impaired women were in controlling sugar levels during pregnancy, the greater their risk of cancer, the findings indicate. In fact, women with the worst control were up to 5- and 11-times more likely to develop any

cancer and breast cancer, respectively, than women with the best control. The researchers' findings are reported in the medical journal *Cancer*. [View Article](#)

Vitamin D May Protect Against Rheumatoid Arthritis

09 January – Reuters reported women with highest levels of vitamin D intake are about one third less likely to develop [rheumatoid arthritis \(RA\)](#) than women with the lowest levels, findings from a new study suggest. Although vitamin D is best known for its role in building bones, it may also have effects on the immune system. To determine the effect of vitamin D intake on rheumatoid arthritis risk, researchers analyzed data from nearly 30,000 women, between 55 and 69 years of age, who participated in the Iowa Women's Health Study. All of the women were rheumatoid arthritis-free at study entry in 1986, and vitamin D intake was ascertained through food frequency questionnaires. During the 11-year follow-up period, 152 confirmed cases of rheumatoid arthritis were identified, the investigators report. Both dietary and supplemental vitamin D intake were inversely linked with rheumatoid arthritis risk, the authors found. High dietary (at least 290 IU/day) and supplemental (at least 400 IU/day) intake were associated with 28 percent and 34 percent reductions, respectively, in the risk of rheumatoid arthritis. However, only the association between vitamin D supplement intake and rheumatoid arthritis risk was statistically significant. No single food item high in vitamin D or calcium was strongly linked to rheumatoid arthritis risk, the researchers point out. However, there was a trend toward a lower rheumatoid arthritis risk with greater intake of milk products. [View Article](#)

West Nile Mosquito Gets Tougher

09 January – CBS News reported one of the most common mosquitoes found in North America, the same type that is capable of spreading the [West Nile Virus](#), has showed signs of resistance to common pesticides, researchers say. University of California, Davis, researchers found mosquitoes under a Marin County apartment that had developed a tolerance to pyrethroids, a common agricultural pesticide. Mosquitoes have shown resistance to the chemical in Africa and Asia, but this is the first instance in North America, experts said. The mosquitoes (*Culex pipiens*) are one of the most common house mosquitoes in North America and are the same species as those that spread West Nile across the country last year. Entomologists say the increased resistance may allow mosquitoes to spread diseases like West Nile virus more easily. And as resistance increases, even the strongest, most toxic pesticides may prove useless. [View Article](#)

Wild Salmon Healthier than Farmed

08 January – CBS News reported farm-raised salmon contain significantly more [dioxins](#) and other potentially cancer-causing pollutants than do salmon caught in the wild, says a major study that tested contaminants in fish bought around the world. Salmon farmed in Northern Europe had the most contaminants, followed by North America and Chile, according to the study released. It blames the feed used on fish farms for concentrating the ocean pollutants. Eating more than a meal of farm-raised salmon per month, depending on its country of origin, could slightly increase the risk of getting cancer later in life, researchers conclude. They urge consumers to buy wild salmon and recommend that farmers change fish feed. But the Food and Drug Administration said the levels of pollutants found in salmon are too low for serious concern. The agency urged Americans not to let the new research, reported in the journal *Science*, frighten them into a diet change. [View Article](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

Fatal Respiratory Diphtheria in a U.S. Traveler to Haiti --- Pennsylvania, 2003

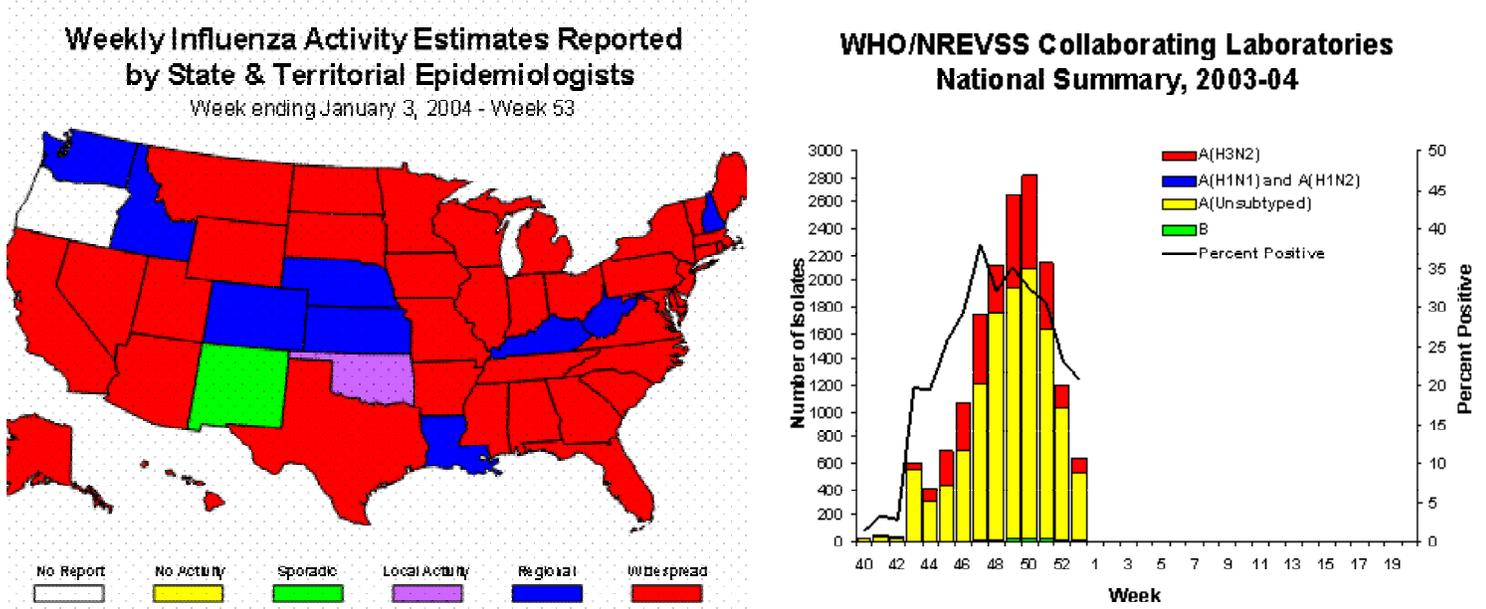
09 January - CDC/MMWR reported respiratory [diphtheria](#) can be severe or fatal in unvaccinated persons; even with appropriate treatment, 5%--10% of patients with diphtheria die (1). For >50 years, [vaccination against diphtheria](#) has been recommended for children and adults in the United States. Persons who are unvaccinated or vaccinated inadequately can contract diphtheria during travel to areas where the disease is endemic, putting them and their close contacts at risk for severe illness. This report describes fatal respiratory diphtheria in an unvaccinated Pennsylvania resident who had visited Haiti, a country where the disease is endemic. The case highlights the need for all international travelers to be up-to-date with all recommended vaccinations, including a primary series of diphtheria toxoid--containing vaccine. [View Report](#)

[Influenza](#) Update

WHO Update 7

14 January -Influenza activity associated with A/Fujian/411/2002-like viruses continued to be widespread in some countries in Europe (Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Norway and Switzerland) and in the USA. Compared with the significant increase in previous weeks, influenza A(H3N2) activity seemed to be leveling off although, in several central and eastern European countries (Croatia, Latvia and Switzerland), it continued to increase. So far this season influenza B activity has been low and reported only from Asian countries (Republic of Korea and Thailand). Most influenza infections this season have been attributed to influenza A(H3N2) viruses. The majority of A(H3N2) viruses antigenically characterized so far have been A/Fujian/411/2002-like; the others have been A/Panama/2007/99-like. Since the end of October 2003, hospitals in Hanoi and surrounding provinces have admitted 14 persons with severe respiratory illness – 13 children and one adult (the mother of a deceased child). To date, 11 of the children and the adult have died. The National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology in Viet Nam and the National Influenza Centre in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China (Hong Kong SAR) confirmed that three of these cases were infected with avian influenza A(H5N1) viruses. At present, there is no evidence that human-to-human transmission is occurring, and no health care workers have been infected. [View Report](#)

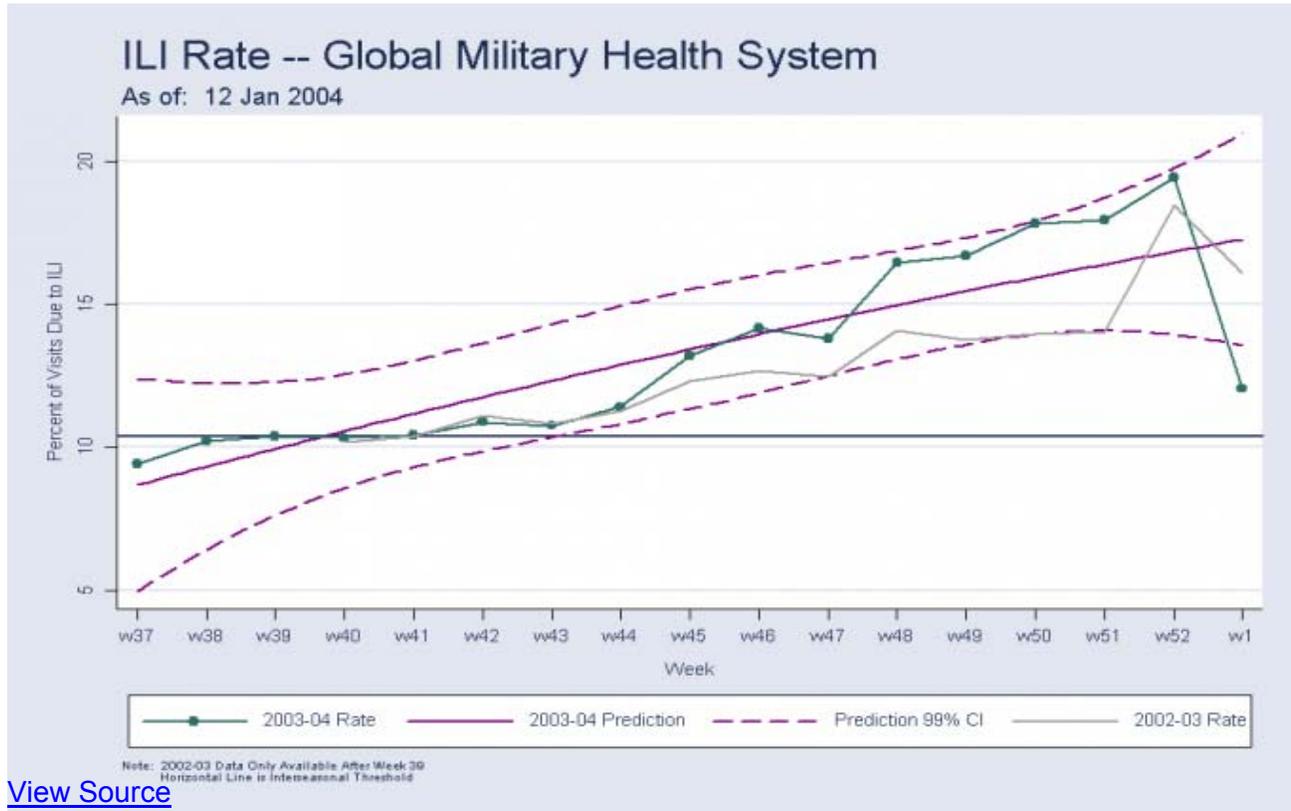
[CDC](#) Weekly Report: Influenza Summary Update Week ending January 3, 2004-Week 53



DoD Global Influenza and Other Respiratory Viral Pathogens Surveillance Weekly Update Week 1 (4 Jan – 10 Jan)

Number of total sites submitting specimens (**newly submitted/cumulative**): **31/ 67**

Number of identified isolates (**newly identified/cumulative**): **96/ 790** (*Influenza A*=787; *Influenza B*=3)



Other Information

09 January – Aljazeera.net reported a mystery disease which struck down hundreds of thousands of poultry in Vietnam has been identified as chicken flu. The government has ordered a massive culling campaign just ahead of the country's biggest festival. Earlier this week, provincial officials had said a fast-spreading disease in the country's south was chicken cholera. The agriculture ministry on Friday dismissed this, saying the preliminary findings were wrong. "We have identified the disease as the dangerous bird flu which was found in Vietnam for the first time," Hoang Van Nam of the ministry-run veterinary department said. [View Article](#)

12 January – The Mainichi Interactive reported the first bird flu outbreak in nearly 80 years was reported at a poultry farm in Yamaguchi Prefecture, government officials said. Following the finding, the Yamaguchi Prefectural Government ordered about 30,000 chickens at the farm be killed, and that the farm be disinfected under the Domestic Animal Infectious Disease Control Law. It has also implemented measures to prevent eggs and meat from chickens raised at the farm from being marketed. The Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry on Monday also urged the chicken farm in Ato to recall all eggs it has shipped. This is the first time since 1925 that the bird influenza virus has hit Japan, according to government officials. [View Article](#) [View Article 2](#)

13 January – Reuters reported dashing hopes that an outbreak of bird flu may be subsiding, South Korea confirmed Tuesday the first new case of a highly contagious strain of the flu in more than a week. The Agriculture Ministry confirmed in a statement the latest outbreak in South Korea was at a chicken farm in Yangsan, about 240 miles southeast of the capital Seoul. Authorities had completed the slaughter of 18,000 birds at the farm in Yangsan that had not died from the disease, officials said by telephone, adding that roughly 900,000 more chickens and ducks at around 30 farms within a 3-km (1.9-mile) radius of the farm would be killed. About 1.8 million birds have been culled since the start of the outbreak was first reported on December 10, the agriculture ministry said. Sixteen outbreaks have been reported so far across the country, including Tuesday's case. [View Report](#)

13 January – WHO reported Laboratory results received on Sunday have confirmed the presence of avian influenza virus strain A(H5N1) in samples taken from humans. The samples were taken from two children and one adult admitted to hospital with a severe respiratory illness in Hanoi. Since the end of October, hospitals in Hanoi and surrounding provinces have admitted 14 persons with severe respiratory illness. The cases are in thirteen children and one adult, the mother of a deceased child. To date, eleven of the children and the adult have died. It is not known whether all of these cases were caused by the same pathogen. At present, there is no evidence that human-to-human transmission has occurred. No reports indicate that health care workers have been infected. The presence of avian influenza A(H5N1) in samples from three of these cases was confirmed by Hong Kong's National Influenza Center, which is a member of the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network. Samples have also been sent for analysis to Japan's National Institute for Infectious Diseases, another member of the WHO influenza network. Results are awaited shortly. WHO is providing support to Vietnamese health authorities in their investigation of the cases and in the prevention of further spread to humans. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#) [View Report 3](#)

USEUCOM

Gulf War Syndrome Linked to Vaccines

11 January – Reuters reported a leaked British Army medical report has provided the first official backing that vaccines given to British soldiers before the 1991 Gulf War caused illnesses associated with Gulf War Syndrome, the Times reported. It said Lieutenant-Colonel Graham Howe, clinical director of psychiatry with the British Forces Health Service in Germany, made the link after the War Pensions Agency asked him to look at the case of former Lance-Corporal Alex Izett, who now suffers from osteoporosis and acute depression, the paper said. The Times quoted Howe as saying in his unpublished report, dated September 2001 and handed to the paper by Izett, that "secret" injections given to the soldier "most probably led to the development of autoimmune-induced osteoporosis." Howe came to that conclusion because in the end Izett was never posted to Iraq the Times said. [View Article](#)

Latvia Seizes Abandoned Mercury

08 January – BBC News reported the authorities in Latvia have seized 2.5 tons of the toxic metal [mercury](#), which had been found abandoned. The substance had been seized to prevent it falling into the "wrong hands", a spokesman from Latvia's constitutional protection bureau said. He declined to say where the mercury had been found, saying that it had been handed to the University of Latvia's Institute of Physics for safe storage. [View Article](#)

Mozambique: Cholera Death Toll May Rise

07 January – AllAfrica.com reported a [cholera](#) outbreak in Maputo, capital city of Mozambique, has killed six people since Christmas, and there is concern that the number could increase dramatically. The government is set to have a meeting with international aid agencies and donors to put forward its concerns and possibly appeal for assistance. Dr Pierre Kahozi of the World Health Organization (WHO) told IRIN on Wednesday the outbreak was "still ongoing" and it was feared the death toll could rise. [View Article](#)

Mozambique: Mass Campaign against Cholera

14 January WHO reported existing tools to control [cholera](#) may soon be supplemented with something new – mass vaccination with an oral cholera vaccine. The idea is being put to the test in a demonstration project in Mozambique by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), Epicentre and the International Vaccine Institute. The vaccine itself has been available for ten years, but this is the first time it has been used so broadly to minimize the devastation of a cholera outbreak. It is also the first time that WHO has considered the use of the oral cholera vaccine as part of an overall strategy to control the disease. The mass vaccination project is being conducted in the Mozambique town of Beira, a community with particularly high levels of cholera 1. The vaccination campaign will finish by the end of January 2004, with about 50,000 people vaccinated, and the first results of this mass vaccination will be obtained within a year. [View Report](#)

Central African Republic: Measles Kills 37 Children in the Northwest

07 January – AllAfrica.com reported some 37 children have died and 44 others are undergoing treatment following a [measles](#) outbreak mid-December in northwestern Central African Republic (CAR), health officials reported. Another 55 children have recovered from the disease, state-owned Radio Centrafrique quoted the supervisor of a vaccination program in Ouham Province, Marc Tina, as saying. Tina said health officials had confirmed the outbreak, and that the deaths were recorded in Gbanga Yanga area in Ouham, 350 km north of the capital, Bangui. He said the Ministry of Health had [immunized](#) 2,584 children against measles in Gbanga Yanga between 22 December 2003 and 3 January 2004. The first measles alert in Gbanga Yanga was launched mid-December when some 29 children were suspected to have died of it. [View Article](#)

Republic of Tatarstan: Outbreak of HFRS in Aktanish Regional School

09 January – ProMed reported an outbreak of [hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome \(HFRS\)](#) has been reported at a school in the Aktanish region. The first patient was admitted to the Aktanish Regional Central Hospital on 11 Dec 2003. At the present time there are 7 people with a confirmed diagnosis, including both staff of the school and schoolchildren. All of them have been admitted to hospital. The outbreak was the result of inadequate sanitary conditions and standards of maintenance at the school. Rodents had invaded the school buildings and their excrement was discovered where pupils ate their meals. Food products were not stored according to satisfactory standards, and the pupils were using products contaminated with rodent excrement, which likewise contributed to the incidence of HFRS. [View Report](#)

Zimbabwe: More Anthrax Cases Continue to Surface

12 January – AllAfrica.com reported more [anthrax](#) cases in humans continue to surface in the Bikita district of Masvingo as the number of afflicted persons has risen from 50 nearly a week ago to 100.

Masvingo provincial medical director Dr Tapiwa Magure said anthrax has wreaked havoc in Bikita, especially in the Ngorima, Chikuku and Devure 2 areas where mostly cattle were dying. The number of anthrax cases had gone up in Bikita district where the disease continued to decimate more and more cattle. Dr Magure appealed to villagers not to consume meat from cattle suspected to have died of anthrax. Awareness campaigns have also been intensified. The department of veterinary services has already embarked on a mass vaccination exercise to contain the disease. Dr Magure said a veterinary department promised to take over 1,200 doses of anthrax vaccines to Bikita. A cumulative total of 191 cases of anthrax has been reported in humans in the province claiming three lives since the outbreak of the disease about a month ago. Over 60 cattle died by the end of last month and more continued dying amid reports that the veterinary department had an insufficient stock of vaccines due to foreign currency shortages. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Iran: Communicable Diseases under Control but Sanitation and Hygiene Shortages Remain

12 January – IRIN News reported almost three weeks after a devastating quake hit Bam in late December, killing an estimated 30,000 people, the prevalence of communicable diseases has remained under control while serious sanitation and hygiene concerns remain in the southeastern Iranian city. Primary health care services were rapidly established after the 26 December quake and the authorities, including the Iranian Ministry of Health (MoH), got the surveillance system up and running soon after. "Now we have a good operational surveillance system and during the past 10 days there had been no significant increase in the incidences of communicable diseases and everything is under control," the WHO official said. [View Article](#)

Iran: Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) in 2003

14 January – ProMed reported from 7 Jun 2000 until 24 Dec 2003, 1,221 human sera were tested from 611 suspected [CCHF](#) patients from different provinces of Iran. 227 patients were IgM positive (confirmed cases) and 209 were positive for CCHF virus IgG antibody. The total number of deaths among the 611 suspected patients was 144. Among the 611, 34 were reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) positive for CCHF virus (indicating the presence of a viral genome fragment in their serum). The total number of suspected cases, IgM positive individuals, and IgM positive fatal cases in 2003 are respectively: 137, 42, and 5. The decrease in confirmed CCHF cases in 2003 may be due either to a decrease in the proliferation and activity of the tick vector or to better knowledge among the population of effective prophylaxis against the disease. [View Report](#)

USNORTHCOM

Discovery of Pesticide-Resistant Mosquitoes Raises Disease Fears

09 January – News 10 Sacramento reported infectious disease experts are expressing concern over the discovery of pesticide-resistant mosquitoes in Marin County (CA). The Culex mosquitoes are the species capable of spreading West Nile virus, which has recently gained a foothold in California. The so-called "super mosquitoes" were found by U.C. Davis researchers under a Marin County apartment. The insects had developed a tolerance to pyrethroids, a common agricultural pesticide. It's considered likely that the pesticide-resistant strain of the insects will gradually spread throughout the state.

Mosquitoes with a resistance to the chemical have been found in Africa and Asia, but experts say this is the first instance in North America. [View Article](#)

National Volunteer Donor Month Combats Blood Shortages

08 January – As the new year begins, the Red Cross hopes Americans will add one more item to their list of resolutions – to donate blood. Blood supplies typically teeter at dangerously low levels during the winter months, prompting blood service providers across the country to designate January as National Volunteer Blood Donor Month. This year, the American Red Cross, the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) and America's Blood Centers have set a joint goal to collect 1.2 million units of blood during the month of January. A spike in holiday traffic accidents has led to an increased demand for blood, but a bitter flu season has added to the usual wintertime donation deterrents, such as bad weather and vacations. As a result, blood supplies have already reached crisis-level lows in many communities. [View Article](#)

New Warning over Monkeypox Threat

09 January – BBC News reported the US could face further outbreaks of dangerous [monkeypox](#) if the virus has gained a foothold among native animals, say experts. The illness, from the same family as smallpox, is endemic in parts of Africa, but 81 cases were reported last year in six US states. Writing in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, researchers from Stanford University say that it could return. Some scientists say that, in theory, it could be used as a bioweapon. It is thought that monkeypox was carried into the US by rodents imported as exotic pets. [View Article](#)

SARS Surveillance during Emergency Public Health Response, United States, March–July 2003

01 February – The *Journal of Emerging Infectious Diseases* published a study on the United States national surveillance using a sensitive case definition incorporating clinical, epidemiologic, and laboratory criteria. Of 1,460 unexplained respiratory illnesses reported by state and local health departments to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from March 17 to July 30, 2003, a total of 398 (27%) met clinical and epidemiologic [SARS](#) case criteria. Of these, 72 (18%) were probable cases with radiographic evidence of pneumonia. Eight (2%) were laboratory-confirmed SARS-coronavirus (SARS-CoV) infections, 206 (52%) were SARS-CoV negative, and 184 (46%) had undetermined SARS-CoV status because of missing convalescent-phase serum specimens. Thirty-one percent (124/398) of case-patients were hospitalized; none died. Travel was the most common epidemiologic link (329/398, 83%), and mainland China was the affected area most commonly visited. One case of possible household transmission was reported, and no laboratory-confirmed infections occurred among healthcare workers. Successes and limitations of this emergency surveillance can guide preparations for future outbreaks of SARS or respiratory diseases of unknown etiology. [View Article](#)

USDA BSE Update

The USDA continually posts updates on the detection of [mad cow disease](#) (BSE) in a dairy cow. Visit their website <http://www.usda.gov/news/releases/2003/12/0448.htm> to view the most recent update.

USPACOM

Australia Isolates Two Suspected SARS Cases

14 January – Reuters reported two people suspected of having the [SARS](#) virus were being treated in a Sydney hospital, health authorities said on Wednesday, the latest potential outbreak of a disease that wreaked havoc across the world last year. NSW Minister for Health Morris Iemma said two flight attendants, who returned to Australia from China Tuesday, were in isolation at Sydney's St. Vincent's Hospital, the Australian Association Press (AAP) reported. [View article](#)

Australia: More Torres Strait Dengue Fever Cases

07 January – ProMed reported the number of [dengue fever](#) infections in the Torres Strait, in far north Queensland, continues to rise, with 160 cases now confirmed in the area. Many of those infected are from Yam Island where the outbreak was first detected in November [2003], but the most of the recent cases are on Thursday Island. The Tropical Public Health Unit says 2 members of the Dengue Action Response Team are heading for the island today. Spokeswoman Rose Spencer says they will be looking for breeding sites and carrying out control programs during the next 2 weeks. [View Report](#)

China: Authorities Caution against Eating Raw Oysters

07 Wednesday – ProMed reported Health authorities are cautioning there are risks when eating raw or partially cooked oysters. Figures from the Health Ministry and the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority [AVA] showed there was an increase in diarrhea cases related to the eating of raw oysters. From 13-31 Dec 2003, 9 incidents involving 227 cases were reported. Investigations revealed a significant link to half-shelled frozen oysters from China that were eaten raw. All remaining cartons of the oysters have been recalled and 2 other suppliers of half-shelled oysters have been asked to stop supplying to restaurants. [View Report](#)

Hong Kong Reports 1st Imported Dengue Fever Case in 2004

07 January – ProMed reported the Department of Health confirmed on Monday the 1st imported case of [dengue fever](#) in year 2004 and urged the public to guard against the disease. The department urged the public to stay alert to the threat of dengue fever and help in the reduction of mosquito breeding. [View Report](#)

Indonesia: Majalengka, Kupang Suffer From Dengue Fever

07 January – ProMed reported at least 13 residents have died of [dengue fever](#) in the West Java reGENCY of Majalengka and the East Nusa Tenggara capital of Kupang. In Majalengka, the dengue fever outbreak has hit hundreds of residents in the reGENCY since December [2003] and has killed 10 people. Separately in Kupang mayoralty, 3 people have also died of dengue fever in the last week. The Jakarta Post visited several hospitals in Kupang on Saturday and found that dozens of patients with dengue fever were still receiving treatment. Newly admitted patients at the Prof. Dr. W.Z. Johannes hospital occupied beds in corridors and the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) due to a lack of space. The pediatric ward had also hosted dengue fever patients since December [2003]. [View Report](#)

Malaria - India, Myanmar

12 January – ProMed reported a death threat looms along the Indo-Myanmar border in the Manipur sector, as the number of [malaria](#) deaths is on the increase, despite the government's all-out efforts to contain it. Malaria is mainly a threat to those residing in the border areas of Tamenglong, Ukhrul, Chandel, and Churachandpur districts. The recorded deaths jumped to an alarming 13 in 2003, though there were only 5 deaths in 2002, Manipur health Minister Dr. Chalton Lien Amo said. [View Report](#)

Philippines: Japanese Encephalitis Alert for Central Luzon

10 January – ProMed reported the Department of Health's regional epidemiologist warned yesterday of the appearance of [Japanese encephalitis](#), which affects the central nervous system and causes retardation and even death, after 7 cases were confirmed in Tarlac. Dr. Jessie Fantone said "The occurrence of Japanese encephalitis in our country could be worse than we think. It is not known to be common in our country and doctors have often made the mistake of classifying it as tubercular meningitis." He said this was what had happened in the case of the 7 Tarlac residents who failed to respond to antibiotics. Fantone said the patients in Tarlac were discovered after a Japanese researcher got interested in their cases and sent their blood samples to a private hospital in Quezon City, which confirmed that they were infected by Japanese encephalitis virus. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

Rats Join SARS Kill List in China

09 January – CBS News reported authorities in southern China threatened fines of up to \$12,000 for merchants who try to hide civet cats, a day ahead of the deadline to slaughter thousands of the animals because of fears they carry a virus linked to [SARS](#). Guangdong province, with a second suspected SARS case announced, intensified its campaign to clean streets and wipe out civets plus other potential carriers that have been labeled the "four dangers" - rats, roaches, flies and mosquitoes. Civets, a local delicacy, were ordered seized from markets and slaughtered after tests suggested a link between them and China's first SARS case of the season, a 32-year-old television producer. A five-member World Health Organization team was in Guangzhou to help Chinese experts try to figure out how the man was exposed to the virus. WHO officials have urged caution with the civet slaughter, saying it could destroy medical clues or expose those involved in the cull to SARS. [View Article](#)

Third SARS Case Suspected in China

12 January – Yahoo News reported a 35-year-old man hospitalized with [SARS](#) symptoms in southern China was officially pronounced a "suspected case" by the government, becoming the country's third patient of the season linked to the still-mysterious virus. Wang Zhiqiong, deputy chief of the health bureau in Guangdong province, said the patient is a resident of the provincial capital, Guangzhou, where the other two cases also emerged in recent weeks. He was transferred to the Guangzhou hospital that specializes in SARS, Wang said. The Chinese Health Ministry also confirmed the newly classified suspected case, saying the man began running a fever Dec. 31. Fourteen people who came into close contact with him and 14 who came into casual contact have been isolated and are showing no symptoms, the ministry said on its Web site. [View Article](#)

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Aedes albopictus Invades Trinidad

08 January – ProMed reported The Journal of the American Mosquito Control Association, reports the first record of *Aedes albopictus* in Trinidad. A surveillance program to detect any invasion by this mosquito was initiated in 1990 by the Insect Vector Control Division of the Ministry of Health, and targeted all ports of entry and tire shops. On 5 Dec 2002, 2 adults of *Ae. albopictus* were detected amongst adults reared from an ovitrap that had been collected on 21 Nov 2002 from the port of Chaguaramas on the northwestern peninsular of the island. Then on 13 Jan 2003 an ovitrap located just 800 m away from the 1st positive trap had eggs of *Ae. albopictus*. Human bait collections performed at the site of both positive ovitraps resulted in the capture of 6 female *Ae. albopictus*. This vector poses a threat wherever certain arboviruses, such as those responsible for yellow fever, dengue, and West Nile occur; currently all 4 serotypes of dengue are circulating in Trinidad. *Aedes albopictus* has already been recorded on other Caribbean islands such as the Dominican Republic, Barbados, Cuba, and the Cayman islands. Whether it will become established on Trinidad remains to be seen. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

Brazil: Yellow Fever Update

12 January – ProMed reported there have been 2 recent cases of [yellow fever \(YF\)](#) in Piaui State and one suspect case in Para State. As a result, Tocantins state [which borders on those 2 states] is implementing mass vaccination in 7 municipalities to block the entrance of YF into the state, which last recorded a YF case in 2001. [View Report](#)

U.N. Agency Trying to Help Haiti

07 January – Global Health Council reported ravaged by poverty and rising political unrest, parts of northern Haiti are suffering from a hunger crisis that could worsen as aid agencies struggle to resolve the problem with half the food they were expecting, the World Food Program said. The U.N. agency, with the help of Oxfam and Caritas, is trying to deliver emergency aid to northern villages where recent floods have left nearly 25,000 people without food. To feed the neediest, food is being borrowed from school feeding programs. [View Article](#)

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hioupdate/>.

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